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# THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

A REVIEW AND THE PERSPECTIVE

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# THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

## A REVIEW AND THE PERSPECTIVE

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TWENTY years ago, the world experienced the most important event of modern history. It was the Russian Revolution. The event is the most important in our time because it opens up a new chapter of human history. Lately, doubt regarding the historical significance of the Russian Revolution has been gaining ground even among its ardent supporters and admirers. It was hailed from one side, and feared from the other, as the death-knell of Capitalism and the first triumph of the revolutionary forces striving for the establishment of Socialism.

The development in Russia during the recent years has bewildered many, discouraged some revolutionary enthusiasts and aroused hopes in the capitalist world. To-day, very few people outside of that country,

however loyal supporters of the Revolution they may be, can claim to have a clear understanding of what is happening there. The recent arrests, trials and severe punishments of a large number of men and women, occupying high positions in administrative, industrial and political organisations of the country, have naturally added to the bewilderment. Staunch and tried supporters of the new experiment have been compelled to become critics, in many cases very bitter.

Taking all the conceivable necessities into consideration, one finds it difficult to explain why practically all the old leaders of the revolution should be eliminated, either politically or physically. It is very difficult to believe that they turned traitors to the revolution to the initial success of which they made their contributions having had devoted their entire life in preparations for that success. On the other hand, it is equally difficult to believe that, in a democratic State with effective mass control, the power has been captured by a small group of people given to sadistic morbidity. Anybody with some knowledge of the structure of the

Russian Communist Party and acquaintance with the actual functioning of the Soviet system must dismiss the idea of a personal dictatorship or of the autocracy of a ruling clique.

Competent writers with no bias in favour of the new system of state organisation, and frankly hostile to the principles and programme of Communism, have come to the conclusion that there is no dictatorship in Russia; that the Soviet system represents a form of democratic administration far in advance of the most democratic of the parliamentary States; and that *internally* the Communist Party itself is a democratic organisation. This being the case, it must be admitted that, whatever may be happening in Russia is happening with the consent of the majority, if not of the entire people.

As regards the crucial question whether the Russian Revolution has failed or succeeded *as a Socialist Revolution* it is much too early to offer a definite answer in one way or the other. The arguments advanced in support of either contention have more or less force. But a conclusive judgement pronounced to-day

in favour of either side is bound to be premature and prejudiced.

The historical significance and positive achievements of the Russian Revolution are to be estimated not by its immediate results. Because these, great as they are, do not necessarily preclude a line of development away from the goal of Socialism. It is not suggested that there is the least desire on the part of the present leaders of the Revolution to strike out such a course. I personally emphatically reject the contention that the present leaders of the Russian Communist Party have quietly discarded the ideals they still publicly profess, or that the Soviet Union to-day is in no way distinct from any other national State. There are many things which are apparently contradictory to fullfledged Socialism or unadulterated internationalism. All these regrettable things may not be altogether necessary. Some of them may be avoidable. But it is not a matter of detail. The crucial question is: Under the given conditions, internal as well as external, is it possible to follow any other policy? No criticism, however dispassionate or sym-

pathetic may be the motive, however firm may be the revolutionary conviction of the people advancing it, can claim relevancy unless the critics are able to suggest an alternative course of action. Impractical criticism is no better than uncritical conformity.

Historically, it would be much too premature to pass the adverse judgement even if all the evidences in support of it were relevant and reliable. Granted that the economic structure and industrial organisation of the Soviet Union are not strictly according to the principles of Socialism, it does not necessarily follow that the revolution has disowned its original ideals. On the other hand, it is simply absurd to assert that the responsibility for the failure of the working class in other European countries to make a revolution belongs to those who captured the leadership of the Russian Communist Party after the death of Lenin and downfall of Trotzky. Neither the slow progress towards genuine Socialist economy, nor the retarded triumph of revolution in other countries is due to any subjective factor. The one as well as the



other is historically determined, the former being the inevitable consequence of the latter.

This does not imply endorsement of the Trotskyst theory of permanent revolution and the associated doctrine that Socialism cannot be built in one country. The contradiction of Trotsky's position is obvious. Of course, a country in the midst of capitalist world cannot have a fullfledged Socialist economy. But what is the working class in power in that country to do when revolution does not take place in other countries? Strict adherence to Trotsky's theory would demand of the working class in the revolutionary country to lay down the power rather than to carry on the work of economic reconstruction which must necessarily be contaminated to some extent by the surrounding capitalist conditions. This has necessarily taken place in the Soviet Union. But only revolutionary romanticists would have advocated the different course, which logically would have been to lay down the power.

The policy followed by the Russian Communist Party under the leadership of Stalin is eminently realistic; and realism is

the fundamental principle of Marxist philosophy. The proletariat with the aid of the peasantry captured power in Russia. The expectation that revolution would take place in other countries was not fulfilled. The joint effort of the capitalist world to defeat the Russian Revolution fortunately did not succeed. What was the leadership of the revolution to do in that situation? For a Marxist, the answer should be obvious: Carry on doing what can be done under the given conditions while waiting for the revolution to take place in other countries, and doing whatever possible to hasten the process.

But a Marxist must bear still another point in mind. External aid may be useful, but unless the internal conditions of a country are favourable for the victory of the revolution, it can be of very little avail. A dispassionate view of things must bring us to the undesirable conclusion that the revolutionary movement did not succeed in the West-European countries because conditions necessary for the purpose were more or less absent there. By this it is not meant that Capitalism had not played out its progressive

role; that the working class had not been driven to a position where it must bid for the capture of power with the object of reorganising society on the basis of a new mode of production. All the conditions of capitalist decay and disorganisation were more or less there. But the decisive factor in a revolutionary situation is the State, the breakdown of which is the decisive condition for the victory of the revolution. This condition has been absent in all the leading European countries except for a short period immediately after the war, and that also only for the central European countries.

In the face of the danger of revolution, even the intensely nationalistic bourgeois States develop an international solidarity, on the basis of class interest. So the temporary breakdown of the capitalist State in Austria and Germany was quickly repaired with the help of those very powers which had contributed to the breakdown. The result was the defeat of the working class in Germany. Once the prospective of an immediate revolution in any of the leading West-European countries disappeared, the development in

Russia was predetermined. There is no use quarreling with history. Man makes history; but can do so only with the material available.

Already in 1921, the perspective of future development was sufficiently clear to Lenin. The New Economic Policy was not only a new policy for Russia. It was a new orientation for the entire international revolutionary movement. The policy of United Front was dictated by the long perspective of revolutionary development. Nor was the policy surely "economic" for Russia herself. For her too it was a new *political* policy. It is realised by very few even to-day that the policy inaugurated by the sagacity of Lenin implied quietly setting aside the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat. From that time on, the social foundation of the revolutionary State was continually broadened to embrace classes which can be involved in a process of economic reconstruction which, given the necessary political guarantee, would develop eventually into Socialism, but was not Socialistic by itself. Only non-critical conformists can make the obviously absurd assertion that even to-day a Socialist

society has been established in the Soviet Union. We need not be ashamed of making that admission. Because that does not mean that the Russian Revolution has miscarried itself. It has been as successful as it is possible to be under the given world conditions; and the success until now has been so great that it can be characterised as the most brilliant monument to the creative genius of man, in the realm of material progress.

A revolution is not made in a day. Society experiences not isolated instances of revolution, but entire periods of revolution. And the periods usually embrace centuries. It took the bourgeoisie more than two hundred years to liquidate feudal social relations, and the autocratic State. Even the French Revolution, which represented the culminating point of the process, was not fully successful before nearly hundred years had passed after feudalism had been destroyed and monarchy overthrown by the Jacobines.

The historical significance of the Russian Revolution is that it opens the period of proletarian revolution. Only twenty years have passed. Is it not obviously premature

to pass a conclusive judgement? Apparent set-backs, or even reaction, do not necessarily imply the defeat of a revolution which stands on the order of the day. The rise of Napoleon was *apparently* a victory of reaction. But at the same time, Napoleonism was the child of the revolution inasmuch as it destroyed feudalism in a number of leading European countries—a historically necessary task which could not be accomplished by the native social forces. So, what if the proletarian revolution of our day is going to have its Napoleonism? It may be a necessary stage.

Marx said that, with all its internal contradictions, decay and disintegration, Capitalism would be able to carry on unless the proletariat overthrew it. Proletariat is an international force. Therefore, it is not prescribed that the working class of one particular country must accomplish the revolutionary task in that country. It is quite conceivable that the process will take place on a really internationally scale, not according to the schematic idea of a simultaneous world revolution, but the proletariat

victorious in one country, and having acquired sufficient strength in consequence of that victory, carrying the revolution to other countries where difficulties of the local condition may prevent the native working class performing the task by itself. Indeed, that appears to be the prospective of the present international situation. And all the developments in Russia, the apparently nationalistic policy of the Soviet State, become comprehensible if we try to approach it from the point of view of this perspective of the present European situation.

## II

It is contended by the opponents of Socialism that the Russian Revolution has revealed the fallacy of the Marxian reading of history. By analysing the development of the capitalist mode of production, Marx came to the conclusion that Socialism would be the logical consequence of that development. He further prophesied that Socialism would be established upon the overthrow of the decayed capitalist system by the proletariat. From this pers-

pective of history it follows that the revolution should take place first in the most developed capitalist countries. According to the Marxist doctrine, the conditions for the success of the revolution are riper in those countries. With these arguments, the opponents of Socialism maintain that the Marxian theory regarding the internal mechanism of the capitalist mode of production is all wrong, and, consequently the establishment of Socialism is not an historical necessity. Contrary to the prediction of Marx, the revolution took place in a very backward stage of capitalist development, which fact proves, it is maintained, that revolutions are not inherent in the process of social progress, but are brought about forcibly by malicious or misguided minorities.

The experience of the Russian Revolution supplies arguments to another set of people who, while professing Marxism, have the tendency of relapsing into the utopian notion of Socialism combated by Marx himself. These people seem to believe that Socialism can be established anywhere or at any time, if the working class, whatever may



be its relative strength, can only manage to capture State power. These Marxists do not realise that their romantic idea of revolution corroborates the position taken up by the opponents of Marxism. On the one hand, it is identical with the contention of bourgeois economists that Socialism is not a historical necessity, but an ideal of naive humanitarians, or a mischievous plan hatched out of fanatical class hatred. On the other hand, the romantic interpretation of the success of the Russian Revolution falls in line with the anarcho-syndicalist theory, that a revolution is brought about by the determined action of an organised minority.

The history of the Russian Revolution bears out neither the contention of the bourgeois critics of Marxism, nor the revisionism of its uncritical admirers. As regards the former, the fault is not of the Marxian reading of history, but with their reading of Marxism. The Marxian outlook of history precludes predeterminism or any mechanical process of development. While forecasting the most probable line of development, it does not rule out unforeseen events,

which may be pregnant of tremendous possibilities, taking place in consequence of more or less accidental combination of circumstances. The Russian Revolution was such an event. It does not disprove the determinist laws of History discovered by Marx, any more than the formation of the solar system can be regarded as a negation of physical causality.

Moreover, Marx never pretended to cast the horoscope of humanity. He did not make any prophecy about the actual happening of the revolution. He simply said that it was bound to happen in the future as it had happened repeatedly in the past. Then, all the arguments of the bourgeois critics of the Marxian conception of history become irrelevant as soon as the Russian Revolution is regarded in its correct historical significance. Strictly speaking, the Russian Revolution is not a proletarian revolution, not of the kind which, according to Marx, should begin in the most highly developed capitalist countries. The Russian Revolution was a belated bourgeois revolution. While opening up the

era of proletarian revolution, it was the last event of the period of bourgeois revolution.

As a matter of fact, if we take the whole world into account that period has not yet definitely come to a close. In many countries, the bourgeois revolution is still to take place. For a time, the leaders of the Russian Revolution lost the Marxian historical perspective and forgot that history develops unequally. Lately, they seem to have regained the historical sense; and curiously, for this welcome reversion to realism, they are accused of having deviated from Marxism. Under the leadership of the Communist Party of Russia, the revolutionary working class throughout the world is to-day fighting with the significant slogan "Defence of Democracy". In Spain, the Communist Party is leading the working class in a revolutionary struggle for democratic freedom. Spain is in the throes of a democratic revolution. In China, the slogans of the proletarian revolution have been set aside so that the working class may take its rightful place in the bourgeois-democratic revolutionary movement.

Since the Russian Revolution, historically, and to a very large extent actually, was not a proletarian revolution, it does not in any way disprove the correctness of the Marxian perspective of history. But this defence of Marxism shocks the catholicity of the romantic Marxists who believe that the success of the Russian Revolution has proved the anti-Marxist notion that a revolution can be made to order. The lessons drawn from the experience of the Russian Revolution should enable us to develop Marxism on the basis of the principles laid down by its founder. The lesson is that revolutions cannot be classified strictly into a limited number of categories. One revolution may have the bourgeois as well as the proletarian character; and this is bound to happen when it takes place in a transition period of history. The Russian Revolution is of this mixed type. We cannot mechanically put a label on it. If that is done, we are sure to have a distorted view of things and fail to appreciate its achievements correctly.

Another lesson of the Russian Revolution is that the social character of the revolu-

tionary State is not theoretically predetermined. Experience has shown that denial of formal parliamentary democracy need not necessarily be expressed through the dictatorship of the proletariat; that a new type of a revolutionary State, unforeseen in the Marxian theory of State, may arise under certain circumstances. In other words, the experience of the Russian Revolution has demonstrated that, in the circumstances in which it took place, the State created by it was a dictatorship in so far as it rejected formal parliamentary democracy, but, on the other hand, it was not the dictatorship of the proletariat in the strict theoretical sense, because it had a broader social foundation. These lessons are perfectly compatible with the Marxian theory of State, the fundamental principle of which is that the social character of the State, is determined by the class composition of the forces involved in the revolution.

Still another lesson is that, under certain circumstances, the dictatorship of the proletariat is not a necessary condition for the establishment of Socialism. This, perhaps,

is the most far-reaching lesson to be derived from the experience of the Russian Revolution. Only on the strength of this lesson, is it possible to reject the contention that the Russian Revolution has disproved the Marxian theory of history. Because, what is implied in Marxian theory is that proletarian dictatorship can be established as the transition to Socialism only in the most advanced capitalist countries. Marx did not say that in the twentieth century, revolutions could take place only in highly developed capitalist countries. Therefore, the revolution taking place in Russia before England or Germany, was no more excluded from the Marxian perspective of history than a revolution taking place in China or in India. The Russian revolution belongs to a different period of history. It would be erroneous to regard it in priority in the scheme of revolutions belonging to a different period. What happened in 1917 was not a proletarian revolution taking place in an industrially backward country, instead of where it should have taken place according to the Marxian perspective of history; it was bourgeois-democratic revolu-

tion taking place in a country which, though sufficiently advanced in the process of capitalist development, had not yet passed through the bourgeois revolution. Being historically a bourgeois-democratic revolution, it should take place before proletarian revolutions in other countries. Of course, Marxism does not say that the proletarian revolution could not have taken place in industrially advanced countries before the Russian Revolution. We are living in a period of transition in which revolutions of different character, belonging to two different periods of history are bound to overlap.

The thesis that the State created by the Russian Revolution was not a proletarian dictatorship, even when it claimed that character, will be established in a following article. Preparatory to that, it is necessary to state facts which disclose the real nature of the Revolution.

What is known as the February Revolution was a bourgeois revolution of the classical type. The movement causing the downfall of the monarchy was led by the Constitutional Democrats, the party of the big bourgeoisie.

Before long, the leadership of the revolution passed on to the petit-bourgeoisie ; that means, the social character of the revolution still remained bourgeois. When the working class occupied the centre of the State, even then the character was not changed except on the surface. It appeared on the scene and captured the leadership of the revolution with the slogan "Peace, Land and Bread". The slogan represented neither the sentiment nor the demands of any particular class. It represented the sentiment and the demands of the entire people with the exception of the feudal aristocracy and military adherents of the overthrown monarchy.

Thus, when the working class captured the leadership of the revolution, it did so without in any way transforming its social character and historical role. As a matter of fact, until July, even the Bolsheviks including Lenin himself did not conceive of the possibility of the revolution developing as it subsequently did. The demand for the Constituent Assembly was not a mere propagandist slogan. Even the Bolsheviks were striving for the establishment of the broadest



form of parliamentary democracy. The counter-revolutionary coup of the Cossack general Kornilov was warded off by the proletariat under the leadership of the Bolsheviks in defence of democracy.

The Bolsheviks conceived the idea of capturing power only when the genius of Lenin perceived that the decisive condition for the possible success in that effort was maturing. The State apparatus was breaking down; the army was disintegrating having suffered severe defeats on the front. The failure of the petit-bourgeois government of Kerenski, to introduce any agrarian reform, had accentuated the discontent of the peasantry. So, the perspective was that, while there would be practically no resistance to the proletariat bidding for capturing the State-power, it could count on the support of the peasantry. While "bread" was the demand of the urban toilers "peace" and "land" were the demands of the peasantry. And it was with these slogans that the revolution became victorious. "Land to the peasant" is not the programme of the proletarian revolution. The great French Revolution fought for this

programme. The fact that in Russia the revolution with the identical programme came under the leadership of the working class did not change its social character.

### III

Although the Bolsheviks began bidding for power with the slogans "Bread, Land and Peace", the factor that united the majority of the people in a revolutionary upheaval was the desire to put an end to the war which had meant wholesale death and destruction unmitigated by the satisfaction of victory. Defeat after defeat had not only demoralised the army, which constituted the main-stay of the Tzarist State; they had greatly impaired the prestige of the monarchy and the classes allied with it. The defects in the front were due not so much to the strength of the enemy as to bad organisation and corruption at home. In hundreds and thousands, peasants and workers were sent to the front to defend the fatherland against foreign invasion; but they were not properly equipped for the purpose. The discontent

against the corrupt court which paralysed national defence and the inefficiency of those entrusted with the organisation of supply, was first felt by the officers of the lower rank. Consequently, there was demoralisation, and discipline began to disappear. The discontent spread to the ranks.

At that psychological moment, the news of the Tzar's abdication reached the fronts. The soldiers, recruited mostly from the peasantry, had been taught to identify the State with the Tzar. The passing of the Tzar, therefore, meant to them the end of all government. While coming to fight for the fatherland, they had left behind what little belonged to themselves. In the absence of any government, who was to protect that? So, they were eager to go home to look after their families and whatever little they possessed. The downfall of the Tzar deprived the war of all meaning. They had been sent to fight for Tzar. He was gone. So, the war must also end. On the other hand, the idea, that with the Tzar the Government had also disappeared, freed the soldiers from the fear of authority which alone maintains

discipline imposed from above. Consequently, there began mass desertions. The demand for peace, put forward by the Bolsheviks, was the concrete expression of the prevailing sentiment and, therefore, hastened the process of the disintegration of the army and breakdown of the State.

As a matter of fact, Lenin conceived the idea of capturing power only when the news of the disruptive development in the fronts began to reach the rear. The Kerensky Government was swept away not so much by an organised revolutionary action on the part of the proletariat, as by the insubordination of the army. The downfall of Kerensky was due to his effort to disregard the popular demand for peace. It is not correct to say that his efforts to continue the war were inspired by the motive of checking revolutionary developments at home. He acted as a petit-bourgeois patriot, eager to organise resistance against foreign invasion. He was not a conscious counter-revolutionary. The German armies were sweeping in, and were sure to occupy the major part of Russia, if there were no military resistance. A mis-

guided patriot, he acted as an instrument of the allied Imperialism which wanted to check the German conquest of Russia.

But whatever might be his purpose, or the pretext for acting as he did, Kerensky undertook to do the impossible. He wanted to continue the war when the army was clamouring for peace. And he failed to do what might have enabled him to accomplish what he had undertaken. Under the pressure of the reactionary upper classes, who had placed him in power, he went back on the programme of his own party, to give land to the peasants. Had he done that, the peasants might possibly be persuaded to go back to the front, no longer to fight for the Tzar, but for the defence of their new possession. Kerensky's Napoleonism proved to be an abortion because the revolutionary foundation on which French Napoleonism flourished, was not laid in Russia. The Jacobins had given land to the peasants; in return, these supplied Napoleon with soldiers. In Russia, Jacobinism rose only after the downfall of Kerensky, which was brought about, like the

downfall of the monarchy, by military defeat, and disintegration of the army.

When Kerensky, in power, foolishly went back on the fundamental clause of the programme of his party, the Bolsheviks came forward with the slogan "Land to the Peasants". So they began the struggle for the capture of power rather as the revolutionary vanguard of the peasantry than of the proletariat; and they succeeded only when they had secured the support of the peasant masses. The signal for insurrection was given by the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party only after it had captured a majority in the Congress of Peasants' Soviets. And that strategic position was captured not under the banner of Socialism, not as a conquest of the proletarian revolution, but by insisting on the fulfilment of the bourgeois revolution, namely, abolition of feudalism, not in favour of the collective ownership of land, but for giving the land to the cultivator.

Kerensky's effort to counter the general demand for peace had transformed mass desertion into a rebellion against authority. The slogan "Land to the Peasants"

strengthened the desire for peace. The soldiers were eager to return home not only to defend the little they had left, but to take possession of more. Moved by a powerful new incentive, they were ready to break down any authority which would send them back to the front.

Originally, they wanted to flee towards home, throwing away their guns, as unnecessary encumbrance, and to insure disguise. In the new situation, they decided to take the gun along,—first to fight their way through, and then to defend their new possession back home more effectively.

Thus, out of the disintegration of the army, brought about by the breakdown of the decayed and corrupt monarchist State, there arose an unexpected revolutionary force, which helped the Bolsheviki to defend their position of power in Petrograd and Moscow, in the meantime captured by the proletariat, the former with the aid of mutineers marines. The capture of the capital cities was mainly due to the fact that they were without any organised authority, and there was no counter-

revolutionary force to put up an effective resistance.

This does not in any way minimise the revolutionary determination of Bolsheviks and the great heroism of the workers who captured power. But in view of the historical facts, we must come to the conclusion that the triumph of the Bolsheviks was due mainly to extraordinarily favourable objective conditions. Indeed, according to a correct understanding of Marxist revolutionary strategy, so cleverly practised by Lenin, insurrection can be successful only under such a favourable combination of objective circumstances. The Bolsheviks organised the insurrection; but they did not undertake the task before they were satisfied that it could possibly be accomplished in the given relation of forces. The main point to be borne in mind is that they did not undertake the task relying solely on the proletariat. Before it appeared certain that power captured in the capital cities could be maintained, thanks to the possibility of a considerable number of soldiers coming over to the side of the revolutionary action of the peasantry, inspired with the prospect of



owning the land they cultivate, the Bolsheviks did not give the sign for insurrection which placed the working class in power in Petrograd and Moscow.

The Soviets, which constituted the basic units of the revolutionary State, were councils of workers, peasants and soldiers' deputies. In an overwhelmingly agricultural country like Russia, the proletariat, except in the industrial centres, could not possibly have majorities in the Soviets. The soldiers were mostly peasants. Consequently, outside the industrial districts, the Soviets were bound to be dominated by the peasantry, and as such could not be very dependable instruments for the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the earlier stages of the revolution, efforts were made to prevent peasant predominance of the Soviets, on the one hand, by enfranchising only the poorer strata of the peasantry, and, on the other hand, by allotting a larger quota to the workers. But in the villages, even those precautions could not guarantee proletarian majorities in the Soviets. There was simply no proletariat in the village. So, taking the country as a whole, the revolu-

tionary State could not be called a proletarian dictatorship in the strict sense of the term. As a matter of fact, it was called the Workers' and Peasants' Republic.

Proletarian dictatorship was established in industrial centres, particularly in Petrograd and Moscow. But it was rested upon the support of the peasantry, given through the Soviets throughout the country. The social structure of the country determined the nature of the revolutionary State. In so far as the initiative for capturing power was taken by the proletariat, the central State organisation assumed the character of dictatorship of that class. 'Traditionally' accustomed to accept the authority of the Government established in Petrograd and Moscow, the peasantry throughout the country recognised the new government in Moscow, as the central authority. That looked like the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat throughout the country.

But the proletarian dictatorship visualised in the Marxist theory of State as a transitional feature in the process of development of the revolution, is not a relation

between the working class and the peasantry. The victorious proletariat exercises dictatorial power in relation to the bourgeoisie which, overthrown from political power and deprived of economic privileges, are sure to carry on subversive activities against the new State. Therefore, the Soviets set up by the Russian Revolution in rural areas were rather organs of the revolutionary peasantry engaged in the task of beating down the vanquished forces of feudalism, than dictatorship of the proletariat. As a matter of fact, the peasantry, whose revolutionary action guaranteed the success of the revolution, were not at all concerned with the class character of the State established in the capital cities, nor were they sympathetic to the Socialist programme of the Bolshevik Party.

It was an alliance of two classes fighting on two different fronts, with two different revolutionary ideals belonging to two periods of history. The forces fighting for the ideal of Socialism were limited to a small part of the country, while in the rest of the country the revolution was of predominantly bourgeois-democratic character. And it was the

victory on that wide front on which the peasantry was fighting for the programme of bourgeois-democratic revolution, that secured the triumph of the revolution as a whole. Organised and led by the Bolshevik Party, the civil war was fought and won by the peasants, and the peasants fought to defend the land that revolution had given them. They were fighting against the Tzarist generals, whose victory would mean the return of the landlords. Therefore, the battles fought on the front, where the fate of the revolution was decided, were battles between the revolutionary peasantry and feudalism.

The Soviet State established on the basis of such a class relation in the revolutionary struggle could not be proletarian dictatorship. It was established by a revolutionary alliance of the workers and peasants, and therefore could not be the dictatorship of one class. The leadership of the Communist Party was not the dictatorship of the proletariat. The party was leading two classes in the revolutionary struggle. Through it, the working class acted as the driving force of the

bourgeois democratic revolution. But the class, primarily involved in this revolution was the peasantry, after the bourgeoisie had declined to play their revolutionary role. This being the relation of classes underlying the revolutionary alliance, the Soviet State, while retaining formally the title of proletarian dictatorship, virtually represented the establishment of a new type of democracy in which political power is actually exercised by the great majority of the population.

#### IV

Just as the breakdown of the established State and the consequent disorganisation of all its branches enabled the Bolshevik Party to capture power, just so, a similarly favourable combination of external factors made it possible for them to retain it. The news of events in Russia terrified the allied powers. They had welcomed the downfall of Tzarism, hoping that the new bourgeois Government would be able to conduct the war more efficiently. But when the revolution swept

away also the Bourgeois Governments, hope was replaced by fear and anxiety.

After the Treaty of Brest-Litowsk, the Soviet Government was regarded as an enemy of the allied powers, and to engineer its overthrow became a part of the plan "for making the world safe for democracy". But the problem was how to do that. The Russian counter-revolutionaries were unable to accomplish the task. They require external aid which, under the given international circumstances, could not be made available to them. All the resources of the allied powers had to be concentrated on the Western front to check the last desperate German offensive which was undertaken with troops released by the suspension of large-scale operations in the East. The only external force which could come immediately and effectively to the aid of the Russian counter-revolutionaries was German Imperialism. But the menace of German intervention was partially checked by the sagacity of Lenin who had the Treaty of Brest-Litowsk concluded in the face of the opposition of many other Bolshevik leaders.

That brilliant strategic move served three far-reaching revolutionary purposes. In the first place, the general demand of the Russian peasantry for peace was fulfilled. The new Government thereby won the confidence of the peasant masses which, since then, became the bulwark of the revolution. Released from the military service in the front, hundreds of thousands of trained soldiers were scattered throughout the country, to bear arms for the defence of the revolution. In the second place, its expansionist ambition at least partially satisfied by territorial concessions made in the treaty, German Imperialism relaxed its offensive in the East, thus giving the new Government in Russia the breathing space for entrenching itself. The third purpose served was to keep the allied powers busy with checking the German offensive on the West and thus to make it impossible for them to intervene actively in Russian affairs in favour of the counter-revolution. The cumulative result was that, until the middle of 1919, the Soviet Government did not have to face any other resistance than that of the native forces of counter-revolution which

were disorganised and demoralised. The farther extremities of the defunct empire remained under the control of counter-revolutionary armies helped with supplies from abroad and reinforced by foreign expeditionary forces. But the revolutionary Government had time enough to entrench itself in the heart of the country, and thus there was created an impregnable base from where the forces of revolution could operate advantageously and beat back the hordes of international counter-revolution.

The Bolsheviki captured power with the expectation of revolution breaking out in Western Europe, particularly in Germany. In the beginning, that expectation appeared to be on the point of being fulfilled. The next year saw the downfall of the German monarchy. The Austrian Empire disintegrated in consequence of severe military defeats. There was a revolution in Hungary. But in none of these countries, the situation was quite favourable for the triumph of the revolution. In Germany, the revolution failed to go beyond the establishment of a parliamentary democratic State. Upon the down-



fall of the monarchy, the bourgeoisie with the aid of the army could take possession of the State machinery and prevent its complete breakdown as in Russia. The Treaty of Brest-Litowsk had given time to the revolutionary Soviet Government to organise and entrench itself for beating down counter-revolutionary resistance. In Germany, the termination of war meant an accession of strength for counter-revolution, which was reinforced by the army released from military service at the fronts.

As a matter of fact, the Treaty of Brest-Litowsk, which was so very helpful for the triumph of revolution in Russia, proved to be harmful for the revolution in Germany. But that was only a secondary and contributory cause. The main cause for the defeat of the revolution in Germany was the existence of a powerful bourgeoisie, which, thanks to the co-operation of the Social-Democratic Party, and the conservativeness of a fairly well-to-do class of peasant proprietors, could reorganise the partially dislocated State machinery and set going ruthlessly against the revolution. In other words, the main cause for the defeat

of the revolution was the fact that the peasantry was not involved in a subversive movement and the great bulk of the working class was not prepared to go beyond the establishment of a parliamentary democratic State. The Social-Democratic Party could not have betrayed the revolution if the majority of the organised workers following its leadership were determined to go ahead. They rejected proletarian dictatorship in favour of parliamentary democracy. That is a lesson of history which revolutionaries should not forget.

Objective conditions for the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship as visualised by Marx as a contingency of the transition period existed in Germany more acutely than in any other country. Nor can we attribute the failure to the absence of a revolutionary party of the working class. The left wing of the Social-Democratic Party, which during the revolutionary crisis operated as the Spartakists, was no less revolutionary than the Russian Bolsheviks. There was no Lenin in Germany; but Marxists do not believe that history is made by great men.

Then, who knows that Rosa Luxemburg would have not played the role if the stage was set in Germany as it was in Russia?

In Hungary the revolution collapsed not only because of the absence of a competent leadership. That defect was undoubtedly there. But the real cause of the defeat of the Hungarian revolution was foreign military intervention. The other cause was the hostility of the peasantry. In Bavaria also, the revolution was killed by the peasantry. And the French army of occupation in the Palatinate was the standing menace. If necessary, it would have marched in to overthrow the revolutionary Government just as the Rumanian army did in the case of Hungary.

Thus owing to the absence of the favourable internal and external conditions, which enabled the Bolsheviks to capture and retain power in Russia, their expectation of the revolution breaking out successfully in other countries was not fulfilled. In that deplorable international situation, the Russian Soviet Government, naturally, appeared as the vanguard of the international revolutionary movement. Nevertheless, its social

character and revolutionary functions, as far as Russia itself was concerned, had to be adjusted to the conditions of the country. In spite of the fact that it succeeded under the leadership of the working class party, the Russian Revolution is not to be regarded strictly as the first fact of the drama of proletarian world revolution. Nor was the Russian proletariat, when it captured power, qualified to be the leader of the proletarian world revolution. Lenin himself knew it and did not make a secret of it. He always said that, as soon as the revolution would be successful in a West-European country, Russia would recede to the background. The delay of the proletarian revolution in countries where it should have taken place earlier could not change the social character of the Russian Revolution. On the other hand, it is precisely owing to the failure of the proletariat to capture power in more advanced industrial countries, that the Russian Revolution has opened up a new perspective of the establishment of Socialism, not expressly indicated by Marx.

The new perspective opened up already in 1920, when the New Economic Policy was introduced. It meant surrender of the *dictatorship* of the proletariat, while the *leadership* of the working class party remained. As a matter of fact, the virtual surrender of the dictatorship enabled the working class party to establish its leadership over the peasant masses without whose support the revolution could not be successful. The New Economic Policy was to sacrifice the immediate interests of the proletariat, so that substantial concessions could be made to the peasantry as well as to the petty traders. The New Economic Policy implied that the Socialist mode of production could not be introduced before the country had been industrialised on a large scale, for which purpose the capitalist mode of production had to be retained.

It was no retreat. That was the only line of *advance* under the given conditions of the country. We can profitably remember Lenin's memorable speech introducing the new policy in the All-Russian Congress of Soviets. Addressing those who were afraid that the dictatorship of the proletariat would

be weakened by the new policy, he said: "We want dictatorship of the proletariat. But where is the proletariat? Ours is an industrially backward country. The proletariat was always very small numerically. Most of it have been killed, either in the war or in the revolution. And in the latter case, the most advanced elements have been the victims. So, if we want to strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat, let us begin by creating the proletariat. And for that purpose we shall have to adopt any policy that will hasten the industrialisation of our country. The policy advocated by me will serve that purpose." This is not a verbatim quotation. But that is the substance and the spirit of the memorable speech.

That turning point in the development of the Russian Revolution was reached not only under the pressure of internal conditions, but also in consequence of the international situation. Given the conditions of the country, the Russian Revolution could not *by itself* develop as a *pure* proletarian revolution. When Lenin said that upon the capture of power by the proletariat in more advanced

capitalist countries, the Russian Revolution would recede to the background, he meant that in that case Russia would become a secondary factor in the world socialist economy. In the situation in which she actually found herself, it was necessary to strike out an independent line of development. She had to create the conditions which would enable her to establish Socialism without the aid of the victorious proletariat in more advanced capitalist countries—even when Socialism was not established in those countries. The object of the New Economic policy was to create those conditions. The expectation of the proletariat capturing power in the more advanced capitalist countries having receded farther, the Russian Revolution must fall back on its own resources.

But that was not done before the final effort was made to help the proletariat in West-European countries to capture power and thus shift the responsibility of leading the Socialist Revolution on others objectively more qualified for the role. Germany was the country where objective conditions for the success of revolution still appeared to be

favourable. Military defeat had accentuated the economic crisis. The conditions of the working class were growing worse. Even the peasantry were feeling the pinch. But the army had not joined the revolution. Why not fill up that gap from outside? In Russia, the revolution had already created an army, which could be placed at the disposal of the German working class. On the other hand, the allied powers had begun to intervene actively in Russia. In the earlier part of 1920, the military position of the Soviet Government appeared to be very precarious. In that situation, it became necessary to make a desperate effort to promote revolution in Western Europe. But the defeat of the Red Army near Warsaw brought that initial chapter of the Russian Revolution definitely to a close. The perspective of world revolution disappeared for the time being. The Russian Revolution was left alone to look for itself.

The immediate task was to win the civil war. That could not be done by direct military operations. The counter-revolutionary armies, closing in upon the centre of



the country from all sides, were very well equipped and liberally supplied by international capitalism. Frontal attack would be disastrous. The Red Army was very badly equipped. Morale alone cannot win battles. Soldiers were not only without boots and coats, but many of them had no guns, and all of them very little to eat. The only effective strategy in that situation, was guerilly operation, and for that purpose active support of the peasantry was essential. Peace and land had won the support of the peasantry. But in the meantime, much of it had been alienated by "war communism". The new Economic Policy gave the peasants full right of ownership of the product of the land they cultivated. They were no longer obliged to deliver their crop to the common stock. They were given the right to sell their produce in the open market and thus derive greater benefit from increased produce. The new policy regained the confidence of the peasantry and consequently contributed to the organisation of effective resistance to foreign military intervention. Once again the peasantry proved to be the decisive factor. It was with

their aid that the proletariat had captured power; and it was again the peasantry which won the civil war.

## V

Dictated by the disappearance of the perspective of immediate revolution in the industrially advanced countries of Europe, the New Economic policy of the Soviet Government provoked differences of opinion inside the ranks of the Communist Party about the immediate tasks of the revolution and the perspective of its development. Those who had believed that the victory of the revolution under the leadership of a working class party would mean the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the direct beginning of the construction of Socialism, regarded the New policy as a deviation from the programme of the party. They opposed the policy of making concessions to the petit-bourgeoisie (rural as well as urban), and prospective compromise with the capitalist mode of production. Lenin's answer to them was

the following: "Whoever expects a 'pure' social revolution will never live to see it. Such a person pays lip service to revolution without understanding what revolution is." Lenin, obviously, meant a pure socialist revolution. In no revolution, the parties involved are arrayed strictly according to an immutable scheme of class distinction. In industrially backward countries particularly, the line of differentiation is bound to be zigzag and shifting.

In his famous book on "Left Wing Communism", which he condemned as an "infantile sickness", Lenin indicated the perspective of the revolutionary development in Russia as well as abroad. He wrote: "We in Russia have been convinced by long and bloody experience of the truth that revolutionary tactics cannot be built up on revolutionary words alone. Tactics must be based on a sober and strictly objective estimation of all the class forces in a given State (in neighbouring States and in all States, that is, on a world scale) as well as on an evaluation of the experience of revolutionary move-

ments." Lenin was not deviating from Marxism in the least. He not only demonstrated extraordinary realism but thereby, won the distinction of the greatest revolutionary leader of our time. He did that because of his clear understanding of the Marxian analysis of class relations in a revolutionary crisis, which alone enables one to follow a really Marxian revolutionary tactics.

The first programme of proletarian revolution had been adopted by the German Social-Democratic Party. According to that programme of Gotha, "the liberation of labour must be the work of the working class, opposed to which all other classes form merely a homogeneous reactionary mass." Criticising this mechanical view of class relations, Marx wrote that it was a mistake to regard the middle classes artisans, small industrialists, peasants etc.—"as a homogeneous reactionary mass." Lenin saw that in the given situation in Russia, it was indispensable for the working class to secure the co-operation of the non-proletarian masses in order to secure the victory of the revolution. And what he proposed was not an opportunist

alliance. The new policy was based on the recognition that, under the given situation, the urban as well as rural middle classes were an integral part of the social basis of the revolution. Therefore, he ridiculed the "left-wingers" for their insistence on 'pure' social revolution.

The Russian Revolution was not a pure proletarian revolution. The State established by it, even in the beginning, was not the dictatorship of the proletariat in the strictest sense of the term. After the introduction of the New Economic Policy, its social foundation was broadened progressively. The social foundation of the State was a revolutionary alliance of the workers and the petit-bourgeoisie against the feudal aristocracy and by capitalists. One of the fundamental lessons of the Russian Revolution is that the establishment of proletarian dictatorship is not an indispensable condition for the construction of Socialism.

Lenin carried the party with him. But he died before the entire party had been fully convinced of the correctness of his strategy. Trotzky appeared as the leader of the dissen-

ters. As a matter of fact, even when Lenin was alive, Trotzky had remained sceptical about the new line. But Lenin's leadership was supreme. Trotzky's theory of permanent revolution does not permit the realistic view of class relations formulated by Marx already in 1875. This theory, advocated by Trotzky even before the Russian Revolution, in opposition to Lenin and the Bolsheviki, regards the peasantry as the reserve force of counter-revolution. Of course, Trotzky also would differentiate the semi-proletarian landless peasantry from the upper strata of their class. But that is a mechanical approach to the problem. It is a wrong approach as well. The peasantry is regarded as the enemy. It is to be destroyed, only by instalments. This apparently revolutionary theory becomes extremely dangerous for the revolution in a country where the revolution, even under the leadership of the proletariat, cannot undertake socialist construction without the co-operation of the peasantry.

The fundamental purpose of the New Economic Policy was to industrialise the country so that, on the one hand, the working

class could grow numerically and, on the other hand, pre-conditions for the establishment of Socialism would be created. The capital necessary for the purpose could be had only from the surplus produce of the premier industry which was agriculture. Russia was not yet in a position to manufacture machinery required for the programme of rapid industrialisation. It had to be imported. The problem was of payment. International trade bills are seldom paid in cash. In those days, the Soviet Government was not at all in a position to pay its bills in cash. The urgently needed means of production could be imported from abroad only by stimulating exports; and in those days, Russia could export only the produce of agriculture and allied industries. So, a relentless, though strategic, warfare against the peasantry, according to the theory of permanent revolution, was incompatible with the purpose of creating conditions for the establishment of Socialism in Russia.

The poor and landless peasantry constituted the majority of the class. But they controlled only a small fraction of agricultural

produce. Import could be stimulated only by persuading the upper strata of the peasantry to increase their production. And that could be done only by conceding to them the right of ownership of the produce of the land held by them. In other words, private trade as regards the produce of the primary industry of the country had to be allowed so that the revolutionary State could be socially reinforced and modern industries could be quickly built under its control as an integral part of socialist construction.

The economic concessions made to the peasantry *as a whole*, not for making an opportunist alliance, but as a token of the recognition of their revolutionary significance in the given situation, inevitably had the political counter-part. Larger and larger numbers of peasants were enfranchised. The kulaks, that is the rich peasants, still remained formally deprived of the franchise, but economic freedom enabled them to exercise considerable influence over the local Soviets. While the State kept strict vigilance over their activities and all pronounced counter-revolutionary tendencies were suppressed, the



general policy was to make the rich peasants, occupying the strategic sector of the agricultural industry, feel that they were not molested under the new regime. The influence of the Bolshevik Party was extended to the villages by admitting an increasing number of peasants into its fold which theoretically should be the monopoly of the proletariat. This process went so far as to drive some old Bolshevik leaders into the opposition and make common cause with Trotzky whom they had combated previously.

The defeat of Trotzky did not put an end to the conflict of opinion inside the Bolshevik Party. After Trotzky, Zinoviev and Kamenev appeared as the leaders of a new opposition against "the transformation of the Bolshevik Party into a peasants party". The new opposition was also bound to be defeated, because it disapproved of the logical consequences of the New Economic Policy which had been accepted by the party as a whole. If the party was really being transformed into a peasants party, the process simply reflected the necessary shifting of class relations in the course of the development of

the revolution. Therefore, the process could not be checked, unless the New Economic Policy was discarded. And that would mean disruption of the revolutionary alliance of classes which constituted the social foundation of the Soviet State.

The world has been puzzled by the fact that, in course of time, one old Bolshevik leader after another came out in opposition to the policy of the party ever since Stalin succeeded Lenin as its leader. The elimination of the "old guard" from the leadership of the party has been ascribed to Stalin's love for power and bureaucratic control of the party machinery. The real reason for these facts, however, is to be sought in the exigencies of the revolution. The opposition of old leaders was due to their failure to understand the nature of the revolution. They expected "a pure social revolution", and therefore were doomed never to see it, as Lenin had predicted. Blind loyalty to an ideal made them unable to find the path that alone led to the ideal. Under the given conditions of the country, the proletariat alone could not undertake the task of constructing Socialism. The

effort to establish a pure dictatorship of the proletariat was bound to fail. Lenin had written that "Socialism cannot be victorious unless it introduces complete democracy" ("Socialist Revolution and the Right of Self-Determination"). In those days, the task of the revolution was to create pre-conditions for socialist construction. Producing classes other than the proletariat were interested in the accomplishment of that task. Therefore, even if hostile to Socialism, under the given situation, they were revolutionary factors in so far as the accomplishment of that task was concerned. They had to be given their rightful place in the political regime and the scheme of economic reconstruction.

The Five Years Plan and the brilliant success of its execution have commanded the admiration of the world,—even from those who are not friendly to the political regime in Russia. The accomplishment of the Five Years Plan, strictly speaking, only a preparation for the establishment of Socialism, can nevertheless be regarded as an integral part of the process of Socialist construction. But the successful introduction of planned economy

was possible only after the country had been sufficiently industrialised in consequence of the execution of the New Economic Policy. Prosperity of the peasantry, constituting the bulk of the population, was the primary condition for a quick development of industry and a rapid exchange of commodities, resulting in the accumulation of capital necessary for the production of the means of production. The New Economic Policy, stimulating agricultural production, brought about two very salutary consequences. First, expansion of export enabled the Soviet Government to re-equip the battered industrial plants by importing new machinery. That increased the production of manufactured commodities demanded by the peasantry in exchange of their produce. Secondly, expansion of agricultural produce brought down the price of food stuff. This enabled State industries to carry on with lower wages without causing much hardship for the workers. The result was larger accumulation of capital which quickened the process of industrialisation.

The years 1925 to 1928 were the period of remarkable economic improvement and

consequently, of political stability. General economic improvement meant increased production of national wealth which constituted the foundation of planned economy. Thus, the New Economic Policy, while representing the recognition of the fact that the Russian Revolution was not a pure Socialist Revolution, did not, on the other hand, mean betrayal of the interest of the working class or rejection of Communism in favour of Capitalism.

## VI.

The years-long controversy over the nature of Soviet economy was largely academic. The question was not of theory, but of actual experience. Owing to peculiar national and international conditions, a new type of economy developed in the Soviet Union, which could not be fitted into any pre-conceived theoretical category. It was neither capitalist nor socialist. It contained elements of Capitalism, while it was a process of socialist construction. The question to be

answered is not whether Soviet economy was capitalist or socialist; the question is whether under the given conditions, the revolution could immediately create any form of economy than it did create. Those who regarded the economic development in the Soviet Union, after the Communist Party came under its present leadership, as degeneration into Capitalism, supported their point of view with purely theoretical assertion that Socialism could not be built in one country. The argument was altogether irrelevant. And the attitude of those advancing the argument was defeatist.

The working class in alliance with the peasantry captured power in one country. The revolution did not spread to other countries. In that situation, Socialism could not be established in Russia. What was the revolutionary Government to do? What should be the economic policy of the party of the proletariat? Theory would not help. The coat had to be cut according to the cloth available. The policy must be determined by the regard for the realities of the situation. What could be done, was the only

thing to do. Since Socialism could not be established, and the classes in power were not interested in Capitalism, a new type of economy was bound to develop.

The line of social development is not theoretically predetermined. Marxism gives us a perspective of history, but it does not make a rigid scheme for the future. It does not exclude unforeseen developments. The Russian experience helps us to grasp the true relation between theory and practice.

A dogmatic adherence to the theoretically correct dictum that Socialism cannot be built in one country, would compel the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to act as no sane group of people could act. It should lay down power and go back to emigration where it could preserve the pristine purity of its theories. Meanwhile counter-revolution would triumph in Russia. This is no caricature. It would be the logical conclusion of the arguments advanced by "Marxist" critics of Soviet economy like Trotzky and his followers.

Former opponents of Trotzky, like Zinoviev, Kamenev and others, who had

rejected the theory of permanent revolution, also failed to have due regard for the class relations which constituted the background, and contributed to the triumph, of the Russian Revolution. Therefore, they were eliminated from the leadership of the party, in which they had occupied prominent places before and after the revolution. The point of their argument was that, since Socialism cannot be built in one country, the economic policy of the Soviet Union was a deviation towards Capitalism. Granted that the danger of the deviation was there, could that be avoided if the Communist Party of the Soviet Union remained under the leadership of Trotsky and Zinoviev, instead of preferring that of Stalin? The opposition, while demanding the rejection of the policy, did not offer an alternative.

Another implication of its argument was that more attention should be devoted to the task of promoting revolution in other countries than to the task of the economic reconstruction of the Soviet Union. That was simply vulgarisation of internationalism, done with demagogic purposes.



For one thing, the Communist International was there to look after that task. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union all along supported the activities of the C. I. Therefore, the charge that, under the leadership of Stalin, the Communist Party of Russia paid only lip service to the cause of world revolution, is utterly unfounded. Revolution cannot be brought about only by propaganda and agitation. If revolution in other countries depended only on the wish of the Communist Party of Russia, it could be easily brought about. Because there was no reason for the C. P. S. U. not to have that wish. On the contrary, revolution in other countries would be so very welcome even for the "nationalist" purposes of the Soviet Union, that it should be only too willing to promote it by all means at its disposal. The cautious and compromising character of Soviet diplomacy has been criticised and even condemned as dictated rather by "nationalist" interest than by considerations of the international proletarian solidarity. It will be shown hereafter that this charge is equally baseless, being made by those who do not

understand that one cannot always do what should be done, but only do what can be done under the given situation.

Secondly, there may be more than one way of promoting the world revolution. Here again we cannot proceed strictly according to a predetermined plan or theoretical scheme. Already in 1921, the chances of a successful revolution in the near future in the countries of Western Europe disappeared. The internal development of the Soviet Union was bound to be determined by that. It is idle to quarrel with history. And it is worst to quarrel with those who believe that Marxists can perform the miracle of making history to order. With the perspective of an immediate revolution in other countries disappearing, the only sensible and practical policy for the Workers' and Peasants' Government of the Soviet Union was firstly to create the pre-conditions for the eventual establishment of Socialism and, secondly, to defend its existence, for which purpose it was necessary to avoid international complications which might involve it prematurely into a war with the capitalist world.

Now, the pre-conditions for the establishment of Socialism are created by the capitalist mode of production. But the capitalist mode of production is not inseparably connected with capitalist economy, the main purpose of which is to make largest possible profit which necessarily means the greatest exploitation of the working class. The fundamental feature of the capitalist mode of production is that capital (which in Marxist language means factories, machines, industrial plants etc.) replaces land as the main means of production. It is evident that the introduction of such a mode of production does not necessarily require the exploitation of the working class by another class. Private ownership of the means of production is not a necessary condition for the introduction of the capitalist mode of production. The mode of production called 'capitalist' (because it was originally invented for the purpose of making profit) serves the purpose of the exploitation of labour only when the means of production are privately owned. With the elimination of private ownership of the means of production, the 'capitalist' mode of production can become

the foundation of a type of economy which creates the pre-conditions for Socialism, indeed, becomes an integral part of Socialist construction, while formally retaining certain features of Capitalism.

In the Soviet Union, the private ownership of the means of production has been abolished. Thus, the fundamental condition for the establishment of Socialism is there. But on the other hand, production itself is not yet for use, but mainly for exchange. So, in that sense, elements of Capitalism are also there. Not only is the process of production conducted accordingly to the so-called capitalist mode, (which, in the last analysis, is only the application of technology to industry), the capitalist *method* is still in force. Surplus value is still produced; and production of surplus value is not possible, unless the direct producer is deprived of, or voluntarily foregoes, a part of the value produced by him. Rapid accumulation of capital, in consequence of larger and larger surplus value produced, thanks to the application of the most up-to-date technological skill, has hitherto been the motive force of Soviet

economy. It derives its formally non-socialist character not from the adoption of the capitalist mode of production, but from the continuance of the capitalist method of production. This, however, is no danger. It does not deprive Soviet economy of the other character of being an integral part of Socialist construction. The distinction between "building Socialism" and "building for Socialism" is sophistic. It should neither be exaggerated nor minimised. By building for Socialism, Soviet economy is building Socialism. On the other hand, it is not yet socialistic altogether.

The abolition of private property in the means of production is a decisive guarantee against the formation of new classes. Socialism does not propose to reduce mankind to one level. Even in Socialist society, there will be strata, determined by physical, educational and intellectual inequalities. Socialism is equalitarian only in as much as it will create equality of opportunities for all. There will be strata. But they will not be differentiated by rigid lines. There will be a constant flux. Having these considerations

in mind, we need not be alarmed by "inequalities" in the Soviet Union. That is no sign for any reaction. Those belonging to the highly paid group cannot crystallise into a class of neo-capitalists even if they wanted to. They have the fullest liberty to enjoy personal comforts and achieve cultural advance thanks to their handsome income. But they are precluded, not by any mechanical law, but by the very nature of the established system of economy, from any economic aggrandisement. There is no incentive for accumulating their income into such large wealth as can acquire illegal political power, or become the means of exploiting labour. Wealth alone cannot be the instrument of exploitation. For that purpose, it must be converted into capital, and, as a means of production, capital cannot be privately owned in the Soviet Union. Under this situation, the incentive to accumulate wealth is bound to disappear. A classless society is in the process of formation. In the Soviet Union, human nature is changing. A country cannot advance that far without coming very near to Socialism. The Soviet

Union is advancing towards Socialism. Only it is following a path not previously foreseen. Hence the controversy and confusion about the nature of Soviet economy.

On the other hand, there is a deplorable lack of frankness on the part of some defenders and apologists of Soviet economy. Why this reluctance to call the spade a spade? Why insist on maintaining that you are travelling the conventional, theoretically pre-determined path while experience has enabled you to find a new road? In order to defend the wholehogging attitude regarding the socialist character of the present Soviet economy, a Neo-Marxist doctrine has been invented. It distinguishes Communism from Socialism. According to these Neo-Marxist theoreticians, the present stage of Soviet economy is Socialism, which is a period of transition to Communism. Marxism knows no distinction between Socialism and Communism. If there is Socialism in the Soviet Union, then there is Communism also. And if there is no Communism, then Socialism is not yet established. That is the fact. There is no shame in admitting it. Conscious, purposeful, building

for Socialism is to build Socialism. That process has gone far enough. The transition is from an intermediary type of economy to fullfledged Socialism. Any other *propagandist* interpretation of the situation will only create confusion. That should be avoided.

## VII.

The foreign policy of the Soviet Union was also determined by the disappearance of the probability of a successful revolution abroad in the immediate future. The probability disappeared already in 1920 when the final effort to utilise the post-war revolutionary crisis failed. But the possibility still remained, particularly in Germany.

On the other hand, the nationalist movements in the non-European subject countries were pregnant with great revolutionary possibilities. Any serious development in those parts of the world might have a considerable repercussion on the march of events in Europe. But before long, from that direction also no decisive development could be



expected. The nationalist movement in Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan, having attained certain measure of success with the help of the Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia, stopped short of the final struggle against Imperialism and even preferred some agreement with it to the revolutionary alliance with the Soviet Union. In India, the movement revealed signs of immaturity which precluded such serious revolutionary developments as might menace Imperialism. Only in China, the perspective was brighter. Therefore, everything possible was done there to help the Chinese people make the long overdue democratic revolution which, if successful, would have had an international repercussion. But there also the revolution suffered an unexpected defeat just when it appeared to be very near to success.

The early diplomacy of the Soviet State did not leave out of account the revolutionary possibilities in Germany. The acute crisis of the post-war years had passed. But conditions in Germany were still far from being normalised. The Versailles Treaty was there to ruin Germany economically and thus drive

her towards the revolution as the only way out of the intolerable situation. In those days, the main object of Soviet diplomacy was to encourage Germany and other defeated countries to form an alliance with the Workers' and Peasants' Republic against the victorious Entente Powers planning to stabilise the system of imperialist domination of the world through the instrumentality of the League of Nations. The first step towards the attainment of that object was the Treaty of Rapallo. In consequence of that treaty, the economic blockade of the Workers' and Peasants' Republic was broken. Economic reconstruction of the Soviet Union could be undertaken with machinery purchased in Germany. Moreover, German expert advice was also secured for the creation of a modern army which was necessary for the defence of the Soviet Union. The prospect of making profit out of the Russian trade kept the German bourgeoisie away from the temptation of seeking financial aid from the ex-enemy countries for rehabilitating industries. In short, Soviet diplomacy, while sincerely supporting the German people against

Entente-Imperialism, prevented such a foreign policy on the part of the German Government as would have led to the liquidation of the revolutionary crisis in Germany. In other words, the object of the Soviet diplomacy was to exploit the revolutionary possibilities of the disturbed conditions of Germany in the years after the war.

In 1923, the situation in Germany became acute once again, opening up the perspective of a possible revolutionary development. But unfortunately, the working class was again defeated. Moreover, the German ruling classes realised that a rapprochement with the ex-enemies was the only guarantee against the danger of revolution at home. The allied powers met them more than halfway, politically as well as financially. American capital streamed in to help the German bourgeoisie to overcome the financial chaos created by the efforts to enforce the Treaty of Versailles by military intervention. British diplomacy, led by Austen Chamberlain, welcomed Germany into the League of Nations and persuaded her to abandon the "Russian orientation." In order to combat

the danger of revolution which, breaking out in the unsettled conditions of Germany, might easily spread to other countries, the Treaty of Versailles was revised. The Locarno Pact heralded the formation of a formidable anti-Soviet alliance. Considerable concessions were made to Germany for winning her over for the holy alliance of the twentieth century.

A new task was set to Soviet diplomacy. It was to prevent the formation of that alliance, which would eventually mean military attack upon the Workers' and Peasants' Republic. The method adopted by the Soviet diplomacy was to promote rivalry between the parties concerned in the would-be alliance. The world economic crisis made the task comparatively easy. The Soviet Government made a trade-agreement with England. Germany was threatened with the loss of the profitable Russian market. Imperialist rivalries, the scramble for foreign markets, thus provoked, militated against the projected anti-Soviet alliance. The offer of huge concessions for exploiting the rich natural resources of the Soviet Union induced powerful financial groups in the imperialist countries to oppose

the plan of the anti-Soviet alliance. But nothing more abiding than a mere breathing space was gained.

Finally, it was realised that the policy of the Soviet Government, internal as well as foreign, could no longer be framed on the basis of the expectation of revolution abroad. The expectation, still remained. The revolution was bound to take place sooner or later in other countries. But it could no longer be expected to take place in the near future. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union must carry on.

It had to face two problems. One, that of internal reconstruction, the other of defence against foreign enemies. The solution of the former problem was necessarily complicated by the latter. Defence of the first Workers' and Peasant's Government undoubtedly was the primary task. The solution of the problem of internal reconstruction depended on the very existence of the Soviet Republic. And the struggle for existence necessitated the creation of a strong army, so strong as could defeat the forces of international reaction single-handed. Meanwhile, every effort should be made to avoid any premature

military conflict of first magnitude. The Workers' and Peasants' Republic should not allow itself to be provoked into a war before it was fully prepared for it.

That exigency of the situation determined Soviet diplomacy. The "nationalism" of the Soviet Government was nothing more damaging and discreditable than the concern to steer clear of the dangerous waters of premature military conflicts. Neither Marxism nor loyalty to the cause of proletarian revolution can have patience for the doctrinaire internationalism which finds fault with the "nationalist" preoccupations of Soviet diplomacy. Following any other course, the Soviet Government could not promote the cause of world revolution simply because the forces making for it were defeated in other countries. What it could possibly do was to get involved in a premature conflict which might mean the end of the first Workers' and Peasants' Republic. The Soviet Government did not give up internationalism. It simply refused to be romantic. The existence of the Workers' and Peasants' Republic has not only laid down the foundation of a Socialist Society; by itself

it is the greatest incentive for the world revolution, eventually it might be the decisive force to bring that about.

The necessity of creating a powerful modern mechanised army very largely determined the process of industrial development in the Soviet Union. Much of the undeniable economic hardships, so much advertised by the enemies of Socialism as evidence for the failure of the Russian experiment, resulted from that necessity. Emphasis had to be laid on the production of the means of production even for the purpose of laying down the foundation of Socialist economy. For the exigencies of defence, that had to be done all the more. The development of heavy industries is an indispensable condition for the creation and efficient operation of a modern mechanised army. Consequently, in the first Five Years Plan, so much place was given to the production of the means of production that only a small portion of the recurringly accumulated capital could be devoted for the production of the articles of consumption. Consequently, hardships were caused not only by scarcity of necessary commodities; the

urban population, including the industrial workers, had to live on rationed food because the peasants would not sell their produce unless supplied with manufactured articles. That was a period of heroism unparalleled in history. Only planned economy could perform the miracle of laying a solid foundation for greater industrial development and incidentally of creating the most powerful and best equipped army in the world within the space of five years. Was the process of the erection of that magnificent monument of revolutionary energy and human creativeness to be disturbed by petty considerations of satisfying superficial observers and prejudiced critics, who were more concerned with their pet pre-occupations than with the fundamental task of the revolution?

The successful tackling of the problems of defence and internal reconstruction enabled the Soviet Union to cope with the extremely difficult international situation in which it found itself upon the victory of Fascism in Germany. Until then, the German Government had been more or less friendly. The alliance visualised in the Rapallo Treaty had



indeed not materialised. But, on the other hand, the Chamberlain plan of anti-Soviet block had also miscarried. Germany simply could not do without the Russian market. America could give her huge loans; France and England could make her concessions as regards the Versailles Treaty. But none of them would willingly allow Germany to regain her place in the world market. The rationalisation of industries carried on with borrowed American capital increased the German need for foreign markets. The only available outlet was the Soviet Union, which, on its part, was always prepared to buy and make the payments regularly. Thus, while giving up the "Russian orientation" politically, the German Government found it profitable to maintain friendly economic relations with the Soviet Union. There was a bond even between the armies of the two countries. Although the German bourgeoisie was eager for a closer rapprochement with the French because of the interlocking interests in the mining and metal industries on the borderland of the two countries, the spirit of revenge persisted in the military circles; and the

military retained considerable power in the German Republic. So, the plan of a Russo-German alliance against France was not altogether given up. That constituted the bond between the armies of the two countries. Even that policy of retaining secret relations with the German army was adopted in pursuance of the revolutionary purpose of preventing complete political stabilisation of Europe on the basis of an understanding between the two groups of former enemies. The purpose was revolutionary from two points of view. On the one hand, remaining in an unstable political condition Europe could be thrown into an acute revolutionary crisis by any accidental event; on the other hand, mutual disagreement would prevent the imperialist powers from carrying out the plan of a joint attack upon the Soviet Union.

/ On Hitler's advent to power, Germany became openly hostile to the Soviet Union. The previous diplomatic relations could no longer be maintained. The new German Government was not only too eager to enter into an anti-Soviet alliance, but aspired to assume its leadership. It approached England

with the proposal for an aggressive war against the "danger of Bolshevism." England had always been mortally afraid of that danger. But in her traditional way, she had been looking for somebody who would draw for her the chestnuts out of the fire. Hitler offered her the services of Germany. The problem of defence became very acute for the Soviet Union. It had acquired considerable strength, but was not yet in the position to meet the world single-handed at both the extremities of its vast territories. Japan would readily join Germany and England. Once again, the skill of revolutionary diplomacy was put to a severe test. Provoked from all sides, the Soviet Government had to act with patience, foresight, self-confidence and discretion. Soviet diplomacy had to accomplish two extremely difficult tasks: To avoid military conflicts without appearing to be weak or afraid, and to secure the alliance of some first-rate capitalist power.

It was obvious where the new ally was to be sought. Although the war-mongering of Fascist Germany was primarily directed against the Soviet Union, France, naturally,

was very much perturbed by the developments across the Rhine. She had reason not to rely upon the ceremonious *entente cordiale* with England. On the other hand, the relations with Italy were very strained. The Franco-Soviet alliance was the obvious counter-move against the victory of Fascism in Germany. The skill of Soviet diplomacy in bringing about that alliance, cutting across the old generally favoured plan of an anti-Soviet block, was not fully appreciated even by all the leaders of the international revolutionary working class movement. As a matter of fact, not a few of them found fault with that astute move, criticising it as rank opportunism dictated by the growing "nationalist" tendency on the part of the present leaders of the Russian Revolution. If concern for the existence of the Soviet Union is nationalism that is certainly not a matter of shame.

In the new alliance, the Workers' and Peasants' Republic found a temporary guarantee against the danger of an attack from Germany. On the other hand, the cause of international revolution was furthered by creating a powerful check against the spread

of the Fascist counter-revolution. But for the new alliance, one or other of the following developments would have most probably taken place. Either the Soviet Union would have been involved in a war on two fronts, with practically all the imperialist powers arrayed against it; or France would have been overrun by Fascism. Either eventuality would be disastrous for the cause of the international proletariat. A military defeat of the Soviet Government would put off the Socialist World Revolution for a time dreadful to contemplate; on the other hand, if France went Fascist, the triumph of counter-revolution in Europe would be complete. Both these disastrous eventualities were headed off by the skill of Soviet diplomacy, which has come in for so much bitter criticism even from Socialists and Communists.

After the victory of Fascism in Germany, only romanticists could still have any illusion about serious revolutionary developments in Europe of international consequence. Counter-revolution was triumphant. Any revolutionary offensive was altogether out of the question. The task of the moment was to

resist the triumphant march of counter-revolution; and since the working class even in Germany could not do that alone, it was necessary to make alliances on the national scale as it had been done so profitably on the international scale. But the necessary alliance could not be made on terms of the working class. That sort of alliance could not last long, even if other classes could be duped into it. In order to be abiding, the alliance must be made as a historical necessity serving the common purpose.

The defence of democracy menaced by Fascism could be the only platform for such a defensive alliance. The historical mission of the proletariat is to establish a form of democracy broader and more genuine than that obtaining in the parliamentary State. But when that earlier achievement of human progress is in the danger of being destroyed by counter-revolution, then the defence of parliamentary democracy becomes the paramount task of the proletariat. Socialism and workers' democracy are to be built on the foundation of industrial progress and relative political freedom laid in consequence of the

victory of the bourgeois revolution. If counter-revolution is allowed to destroy that foundation, the perspective before the world will be rather of a relapse into mediaeval barbarism than of Socialism and greater human freedom. Therefore, the defensive fight against triumphant counter-revolution is the task of the moment. Everything done for that purpose is a revolutionary act, and therefore fully justified.

### VIII.

The revolution begun in 1917 has not developed rapidly enough to satisfy the expectations of the easily discouraged enthusiast. Even, to-day, the perspective of development may appear less bright than ever. But that, by no means, proves that the period of revolution is closed. The forces of the revolution, begun twenty years ago, have suffered defeats in many a country, but in Russia have consolidated themselves not only in the form of unprecedented human achievements, but also as a formidable power

guaranteeing the success of the revolution throughout the world.

More than fifty years lapsed between the French Revolution and the establishment of Democracy in the other countries of Europe. The intervening period was marked by exchange of victories between revolution and counter-revolution. We are having the same experience in the present period of proletarian revolution. The delay in the development of revolution in other European countries had its repercussion on the situation in France. At its home, the revolution could not retain its original drastic character. Jacobinism was liquidated, to be followed by Napoleonism, which, representing a reaction in France, operated as a powerful revolutionary factor for the rest of Europe.

History never repeats itself exactly. In our time, the proletarian revolution has not suffered any setback comparable to that suffered by the bourgeois revolution in France. The proletarian revolution may still have its period of Napoleonism. But that will be of entirely a different nature. Napoleon did not carry the banner of bourgeois revolution con-



sciously. He was simply an instrument, and an unwilling instrument at that. Proletarian Napoleonism, should it ever become a historical necessity, would be a consciously revolutionary force.

Now, let us see if the necessity will ever be there. The correct perspective must be found in a rigorously realistic analysis of the situation. History will not conform itself to our desire. Our perspective, therefore, should not be coloured by our desire. The very regrettable, but most outstanding fact is that in every important European country, the working class has suffered such a severe defeat as precludes the possibility of any effective offensive action in the near future.

In England, the disparity between the objective and subjective conditions for revolution still remains very great. Indeed, the still lingering reformist illusions of the British working class reflects the immaturity of the objective conditions for revolution. Super profit made in the colonies and income from foreign investments still enable the British bourgeoisie to tide over the economic crisis at home. Therefore, the perspective in

England is rather of demoralisation than of revolution. In the past, great Empires met that fate. In the case of England, history may repeat itself in that sense. Of course, there always remains the chance of revolution in other countries having decisive repercussion in England.

In France, the proletariat is not yet beaten, nor does it lack revolutionary spirit. There, both the objective and subjective conditions for revolution are very mature. But any attempt on the part of the French working class, under the given conditions of the world, is most likely to be defeated by the joint forces of international reaction. The revolution has become a really international affair. It is no longer international only symbolically. Any action on the part of the working class of any single country must be determined by the revolution of forces on the international scale.

If France were left alone, then there would be no obstacle to the revolution becoming victorious even to-day. But will she be left alone? That is the decisive question. And nobody with any sense of responsibility,

and understanding of the existing relation of international forces, can answer the question in the affirmative. The Spanish experience compels us to give the answer decisively in the negative. And it goes without saying that the intervention of the foreign forces of reaction will be much more prompt and on a larger scale in France than it has been in Spain. Therefore, before deciding in favour of a revolutionary offensive in the only single country where that is at all possible to-day, we shall have to look for possibly international support to counter-balance the international aid to counter-revolution. From where can that possibly come? From the Rhine, Hitler has almost appeared on the Pyraenees. While France is surrounded by the iron ring of international Fascism, ready to pounce upon her in the case of revolution, the working class in Germany as well as in Italy lies prostrate after severe defeat and years of brutal repression. Intervention by those countries could be prevented or even checked only by effective revolutionary action on the part of the working class there. And to be effective, that action must not fall short of

threatening the overthrow of the Fascist regime and the capture of political power. The regard for the realities in those countries does not permit any optimism regarding such action.

There is a tendency to welcome war as the opportunity for revolutionary action. That is a fatalist tendency which should not be allowed to influence the tactics and strategy of the revolutionary movement. Since a war on a large scale is likely to open the flood gates of revolution, it is but natural for the capitalist States to try their best for putting off that fateful day. Consequently, to pin our hopes on the "inevitability" of war is to believe that revolution will take place with the aid and connivance of its enemies. Then, what is the guarantee for the revolution succeeding in case of war? As a matter of fact, the nature of future wars is indicated by the Spanish experience. There will be more cases of invasions for supporting native reaction against revolution than of one State declaring war upon another. In other words, to-day the war has become the expression of counter-revolution. It is waged exclusively

with the purpose of suppressing revolution. Consequently, it is a dangerous illusion to pin our hopes on war. The days are gone when a national war could be converted into a civil war. Because, to-day, there are no national wars. On the other hand, civil war is being waged on an international scale. Any war will mean civil war on a gigantic scale—offensive of the counter-revolution against the forces of international revolution.

Under the given conditions of the world, revolutionary offensive in any country must depend on the indispensable external help only from one source. And that is the Soviet Union. The situation is not likely to change in the near future. The victory of Fascism in Spain will definitely close a period of possible revolutionary offensive of any decisive importance. That victory, indeed is not yet complete. But, on the contrary, there is no use hoping against hope. The revolution can still win only on one condition: abandonment of the treacherous policy of non-intervention, so that the Republican Government can receive substantial aid from sympathisers abroad. Even in that case, it will have to

depend mostly on France. England may not like the Italian conquest of Spain. But she will certainly not give any active help to the potentially revolutionary Government. The Soviet Union is handicapped by geographical distance and the long route can be easily controlled by Germany and Italy.

So, the success of revolution in Spain is ultimately conditional upon a revolution in France. There is a powerful Fascist movement in that country, aided and abetted by the ruling classes. While not only the working class but also the petty-bourgeois democratic masses are sympathetic towards the Spanish Republicans, and even the present Government is similarly disposed to some extent, the army cannot be depended upon when support to the Spanish Republicans will certainly involve France in a war with the Fascist powers. So, the attitude of the army becomes the decisive factor. But to-day, the armies are no longer the instruments of the respective national States; they are so many units of international counter-revolution. Of course, armies still are recruited from the lower strata of the population. The common

soldier still remains a potential ally of the revolution. But he is no longer the whole of the army. The modern mechanised army has very largely become immune to the revolutionary susceptibility of the common soldier.

In this situation, proletarian Napoleonism ceases to be a matter of mere speculation, and appears as a decidedly possible, even necessary feature of the perspective of revolutionary development. The success of revolution is not guaranteed even in the country where the native forces are not yet beaten and are sufficiently powerful, unless external aid is provided for. And that can come only from the Soviet Union.

Now, it will be no easier for the Soviet Union to help a revolutionary Government in France than it has been in Spain. In either case, the decisive aid could be given only at the risk of a war in which all the international forces of reaction will be allied on the side of Germany and Italy. Those who accuse the Soviet Union for the failure to come to the aid of the revolution in Spain more effectively, do not stop to think whether

the risk can be taken without seriously prejudicing the cause of revolution, instead of promoting it. The risk could be taken either on the assumption that the war would coincide with serious revolutionary upheavals in the Fascist countries, or on the certainty on the part of the Soviet Union of the power to face and vanquish the united forces of international counter-revolution. The assumption can be made rather by way of speculation than on the basis of an unbiased analysis of the relation of forces. Until recently, the Soviet Union was not prepared to run the risk. Even to-day, it cannot be done lightly.

The defeat in a large-scale war might not only endanger the very existence of the Soviet Union; it is sure to crush the forces of revolution in the victorious Fascist countries. This consideration has influenced Soviet foreign policy during the last years, and has determined the tactics of the Communist International. The time has not come to change the course hitherto followed. Defeat has compelled the working class to be on the defensive. It would be irresponsible for the



Communist International to lead the proletariat in Spain or France, for example, in any all-round offensive action, when the guarantee for the success of that venture is not fully available. Under the situation, the People's Front policy was adopted as the strategy of retreat, and defence against Fascism. It does mean betrayal of the proletarian revolution. Nor does it imply abandonment of the ideal of Socialism. To protect the proletariat from the danger of destruction in premature conflicts, is a revolutionary duty.

While preserving the forces of revolution in other countries, the base of revolution must be made invincible. That is the primary consideration. That necessity can be fully realised only in the light of the perspective of proletarian Napoleonism.

On repeated occasions, the Soviet Union has proved its loyalty to the cause of peace. Its Socialist economy is free from the contradictions which breed expansionist greed and lead to aggressive wars. No serious bourgeois statesman believes in the "red menace". It is fully believed even by its enemies, that the Soviet Union will never go

to war, except in self-defence. But the exigency of self-preservation requires a foresighted policy. It is an equally well known fact that a number of powerful States are preparing an offensive war against the Soviet Union. The projected war is a part of international civil war. Having beaten down the forces of revolution in their own countries, the Fascist Governments wish to destroy the base of proletarian world revolution. So threatened, it would be stupid for the Soviet Union to wait indefinitely with patience until the enemy breaks in. It is a typical case where to attack is the best defence. But if the Soviet Union ever takes the initiative in precipitating a war, it will not be a war for the aggrandisement of national interests. It will be an episode in international civil war which is already raging fiercely. Red Napoleonism may appear as the signal for offensive on the forces of international revolution, when they have sufficiently recovered from their past defeats.

Triumphant counter-revolution in a number of European countries must be defeated, before the forces of revolution in

those countries could reassert themselves effectively. How that will be done, is the question. It is possible that counter-revolutionary States will weaken themselves in a mutual military conflict. But that possibility is not to be counted upon as the perspective of revolutionary development. As against that possibility, it is to-day almost certain that the next war will begin with an attack against the Soviet Union either by the joint forces of Fascism or by any one of the Fascist States. International civil war, so aggravated, will end in the overthrow of the counter-revolutionary States and the consequent success of revolution in other European countries, only if the Soviet Union will be powerful enough to carry the war into the home of the attacking States. Under the given world conditions, and the relation of forces in the national as well as international scale, no other perspective of a triumphant revolution can appear to be more plausible. Therefore, to avoid the possible military defeat of the Soviet Union in prematurely precipitated military conflict, is the fundamental consideration of the strategy of the international revolutionary

movement. At the same time, the military power of the Soviet Union must be increased at all costs. The army of the Soviet Union may still have to appear as the military vanguard of the world revolution.

The unity of purpose on the part of the leadership of the Soviet Union as well as of the Communist International is of supreme importance. Any disturbance of that unity is likely to be the cause of weakness. There are those who fail to realise the supreme need of the moment. Their activities, if unrestricted, may become harmful. We are still in the midst of the civil war, the severest battles of which are yet to be fought. Revolutionary ruthlessness still remains a necessary weapon. It is a disagreeable weapon, but cannot yet be discarded without endangering the revolution itself. It is from this point of view that the recent arrests and trials in the Soviet Union are to be visualised. The task immediately before the Soviet Union is not only to defend itself, but in order to defend itself, to come to the aid of the revolutionary forces in other countries and that will mean military operation on a gigantic scale

not dreamt even by the boldest militarist. The last and decisive battles of international civil war shall have to be fought on the ground of the enemies of the revolution and with their own instruments.

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## APPENDIX

### THE MOSCOW TRIALS \*

Revolution eats her own children. That is a popular saying which acquired great plausibility from the tragic experiences of the French Revolution. Is the tragic drama being re-enacted in our time? Is the Russian Revolution devouring her own children? Progressive forces throughout the world are bound to be disturbed by the fact that even when the Revolution appeared to have accomplished its destructive tasks and well advanced on the road of reconstruction, such acts should be committed as are necessary only when it is still in danger. The French Revolution gave birth to Napoleonism because Terror did not stop as soon as it had accomplished its unpleasant task of exterminating the defenders of the old regime. The moment it laid its hand on Danton, it began to weaken the forces of democracy and thus help the creation of an atmosphere favourable to the rise of Napoleon who was to restore monarchy. All the leaders of the revolution, great and small, followed Danton to the guillotine, accused of being enemies of the revolution. A similar process of extermination has been going on in Russia ever since the fall

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\* This was written in May, 1937.

of Trotzky in 1925. In the beginning, the extermination was not physical, but political. One after another old leaders were removed from positions of authority and even expelled from the party. It is conceivable that it was a necessary process. Those who had played prominent, even decisive parts in the periods of preparation and destruction, might not all prove equally competent when confronted with the problems of re-construction. If they did not, they must make room for a new set of leaders. The Revolution is greater than individual revolutionaries however great these may be. It is but natural that in different stages of its own development the revolution should throw up new leaders to reinforce or even to replace the old cadre. But, in the course of time, the character of the process changed. Conceivably, necessary political elimination went to the extent of physical extermination. Was it necessary? The recent trials and conviction of a large number of old leaders appear to give an affirmative answer to this question. They were accused of having conspired against the revolution. They pleaded guilty to the charge. The whole affair had the appearance of a melodrama. It delighted the capitalist world which hopefully exclaimed: Look, the Revolution is devouring her own children once again. Others, who pretend to be neutral between the forces of revolution and counter-revolution, expressed disgust at what they believed to be an unnecessary act of cruelty. Revolutionaries

throughout the world are puzzled, and are earnestly looking for some convincing explanation.

Dogmatic assertion about the guilt of the accused does not carry conviction. Sweeping justification begs the question. Uncritical apology is but a token of blind faith and intellectual slavery. It is necessary to probe deep in the conditions which compel the commission of acts alleged to have been committed by the accused.

The necessity for these trials is found in the fact that opposition elements inside the Communist Party were becoming instrumental for the overthrow of the established order. This fact is established not only by the confessions of the accused themselves. These could be discredited as made under pressure, though the spontaneity, comprehensiveness and vigour of those statements leave little room for such doubt. However, the fact is established by other evidence which is entirely voluntary. In his latest book "The Betrayed Revolution"—Trotzky openly advocates violent overthrow of the present Russian State which he considers to be an instrument of counter-revolution. It is but natural for those who share this view to do whatever is possible under the given conditions for the defence of their cherished ideal. They did. Thus the confession of Radek and others is corroborated by the fact of their opinion about the nature of the present Soviet Government. If they believed that it did not incorporate the ideal for which they had worked throughout their lives



they should be morally justified in their efforts for destroying it. Why did they then take up the penitent attitude during the trial? The answer to this most intriguing question is found in a critical analysis of the background on which the trial took place.

When former leaders of the party believed that the party was going in the wrong way, their anxiety naturally was to regain their influence which, in their opinion, could alone save the revolution. But open opposition to the new leadership led immediately to expulsion from the party. It was not possible to influence the party from outside. The way back to the party was found in hypocrisy. Having gained re-admission into the party by false declaration, the old leaders were compelled to adopt clandestine methods for the propagation of the views they had openly abandoned. So, the root of the evil is to be found in the internal condition of the party. Former leaders of the party were denied the possibility of expressing their views, and were forced to adopt underhand methods of activity which brought them in contact with real enemies of the revolution. It is absurd to hold that men who had devoted their whole life to the cause of revolution should sell themselves willingly to the Fascists. But conscious motive is not the point at issue. Presumably, they acted according to their revolutionary conviction. In doing so, however, they became inspirers of counter-revolutionary activities,

and as such deserved their tragic end. When the dangerous implications of their activities became clear to them in the light of facts placed before them after arrest, they were not slow to admit their guilt though they had not committed it consciously. Their attitude during the trial was a tragic token of their sincerity, of their undying devotion to the cause of revolution. It was an interesting psychological phenomenon also. But, for the moment we are not concerned with that aspect of the matter.

The deplorable conditions, under which tried and devoted revolutionaries were forced to become instruments of counter-revolution, are created by the suppression of all criticism of the leadership, of the expression even of any doubt about the correctness of the official policy. They are created in the stifling atmosphere characterised by utter absence of free discussion of problems that are constantly rising out of the experience of reconstruction. Clandestine activity on the part of dissenting elements is bound to take place in the absence of democracy in the administration of the party. The trial and stern administration of revolutionary justice have deprived the enemies of social liberation of some very convenient means for achieving their nefarious purpose. But the source of danger still remains, and it is a very fruitful source. In the given unhealthy atmosphere of party life, opposition elements are bound to degenerate and be demoralized. No party can ever be entirely free from 'opposition. Absolute

unanimity is a sign of intellectual stagnation or hypocritical conformity. Freedom of criticism is the only guarantee against the dissenters and non-conformists lending themselves willingly or unwillingly to the service of the common enemy.

## ERRATA

Chapter VIII—paragraph 15—last sentence, after the words “offensive on the”, read: “part of the” . . . . .

Chapter VI—paragraph 8—sentence 6, after the words “those who”, read: “do not” . . . . .